

Committee on Resources,

Subcommittee on Fisheries Conservation, Wildlife & Oceans

[fisheries](#) - - Rep. Wayne Gilchrest, Chairman

U.S. House of Representatives, Washington, D.C. 20515-6232 - - (202) 226-0200

Witness Statement

U.S. House of Representatives
Committee on Resources
Subcommittee on Fisheries, Conservation, Wildlife and Oceans
Testimony on H.R. 1230
10:00 a.m. June 21, 2001
Room 1324, Longworth House Office Building

My name is John Jakcsy. I am the Regional Manager of Community Relations and Communications for National Steel Corporation's Great Lakes Operations located in Ecorse, Michigan. I have been involved in public affairs activities for National Steel for nearly 24 years in the Detroit area.

In the community, I currently serve as Chairman of the Board of the Southern Wayne County Chamber of Commerce (1,100 members) and represent National Steel on the Downriver Detroit Waterfront Revitalization Task Force, the Greater Detroit American Heritage River Initiative and the City of Ecorse Community Enhancement Program. I am a lifelong resident of Wayne County, Michigan.

Through these experiences, I've gained much first hand knowledge about the Detroit River and its value to our region.

With more than five miles of riverfront property, National Steel Corporation is a major land owner along the Detroit River. The Detroit River plays a vital role to National Steel and its employees. The River serves as a major strategic link to transport raw materials used in the making of steel. It provides other important functions necessary to the operations of our company. For our employees, the River serves as a resource for recreational activities such as boating, fishing, hunting, photography and other leisure interests.

National Steel values the River and it's many uses. Our environmental stewardship of the River is an important part of our corporate culture. We have completed major projects and made significant investment to protect and enhance the quality of Detroit River water. These efforts include investment for water purification, soft shore engineering projects and the establishment of wildlife habitat.

Recently, on June 15, 2001, National Steel donated its 21-acre Mud Island property, located in the Detroit River in Ecorse, to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Mud Island lies within a significant staging area for migratory birds and fish. The island is a haven for wildlife, trees, bushes and grasses. It will become a part of the Wyandotte National Wildlife Refuge.

Unfortunately, significant loss of coastal wetlands habitat on the Detroit River ecosystem has occurred over many years. The need to protect remaining habitat and to restore other wetlands is clear. The best way to assure that this objective is met is to create refuges that will provide wildlife protection for generations to come. This is a main reason why National Steel donated Mud Island to become part of the Wyandotte

National Wildlife Refuge.

Under H.R. 1230, Mud Island will become a part of the Detroit River International Wildlife Refuge. H.R. 1230 provides an effective strategy for preserving wildlife habitat of this island and the many other islands, shoals and channels along the lower Detroit River.

H.R. 1230 offers a sensible approach to land preservation. It recognizes the historical and ecological balance of a working and recreational river. It does not threaten the rights of private landowners.

We believe that through the cooperative efforts of National Steel, the Downriver Waterfront Task Force, the Greater Detroit American Heritage Initiative and many other business and civic organizations, great progress is being made to protect and restore wildlife habitat of the Detroit River. Passage of H.R. 1230 will enhance these efforts.

The creation of the first international wildlife refuge of this sort will be an important mechanism for the vision of conservation, restoration and management of fish and wildlife habitat in the United States and Canada. It is an important step in preserving Detroit River ecology for generations to come.

We applaud Congressman John Dingell for introducing this legislation and give our support to it.

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